

Client's Docket No. MMB239

**APPLICATION**

**FOR UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENT**

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**SPECIFICATION**

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

BE IT KNOWN THAT I, **JASON L. KING**, a citizen of the  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, have invented a new and useful  
**FISHING BAIT APPARATUS** of which the following is a  
specification:

## **FISHING BAIT APPARATUS**

### **5 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

#### **Field of the Invention**

The present invention relates to fishing bait holders and more  
10 particularly pertains to a new fishing bait apparatus for providing a  
hands-free method of separating minnows according to size.

#### **Description of the Prior Art**

15 The use of fishing bait holders is known in the prior art.  
More specifically, fishing bait holders heretofore devised and  
utilized are known to consist basically of familiar, expected and  
obvious structural configurations, notwithstanding the myriad of  
designs encompassed by the crowded prior art which have been  
20 developed for the fulfillment of countless objectives and  
requirements.

Known prior art includes U.S. Patent No. 5,109,625; U.S.  
Patent No. 2,651,137; U.S. Patent No. 5,499,473; U.S. Patent No.  
25 5,228,231; U.S. Patent No. 4,462,180; and U.S. Patent No. Des.  
163,697.

While these devices fulfill their respective, particular  
objectives and requirements, the aforementioned patents do not

disclose a new fishing bait apparatus. The prior art includes bait buckets having holes through walls thereof for aerating the bait contained therein.

## 5 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The general purpose of the present invention, which will be described subsequently in greater detail, is to provide a new fishing bait apparatus which has many of the advantages of the fishing bait holders mentioned heretofore and many novel features that result in a new fishing bait apparatus which is not anticipated, rendered obvious, suggested, or even implied by any of the prior art fishing bait holders, either alone or in any combination thereof. The present invention includes a container having side, upper and lower walls, and also having an open top; and also includes a lid assembly including a lid member being hingedly attached to the container and also including lid support members for supporting the lid member in an open position; and further includes a handle assembly including a handle being pivotally attached to the container; and also includes bait storage members being disposed in the container and upon the upper wall. None of the prior art includes the combination of the elements of the present invention.

There has thus been outlined, rather broadly, the more important features of the fishing bait apparatus in order that the detailed description thereof that follows may be better understood, and in order that the present contribution to the art may be better appreciated. There are additional features of the invention that will be described hereinafter and which will form the subject matter of the claims appended hereto.

In this respect, before explaining at least one embodiment of the invention in detail, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited in its application to the details of construction and to the arrangements of the components set forth in the following 5 description or illustrated in the drawings. The invention is capable of other embodiments and of being practiced and carried out in various ways. Also, it is to be understood that the phraseology and terminology employed herein are for the purpose of description and should not be regarded as limiting.

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It is an object of the present invention to provide a new fishing bait apparatus which has many of the advantages of the fishing bait holders mentioned heretofore and many novel features that result in a new fishing bait apparatus which is not anticipated, 15 rendered obvious, suggested, or even implied by any of the prior art fishing bait holders, either alone or in any combination thereof.

Still another object of the present invention is to provide a new fishing bait apparatus for providing a hands-free method of 20 separating minnows according to size.

Still yet another object of the present invention is to provide a new fishing bait apparatus that is easy and convenient to use.

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Even still another object of the present invention is to provide a new fishing bait apparatus that can easily move minnows from one storage member to the next by simply opening and closing the gate members.

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These together with other objects of the invention, along with the various features of novelty which characterize the invention, are pointed out with particularity in the claims annexed to and

forming a part of this disclosure. For a better understanding of the invention, its operating advantages and the specific objects attained by its uses, reference should be made to the accompanying drawings and descriptive matter in which there are illustrated preferred  
5 embodiments of the invention.

#### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

The invention will be better understood and objects other than  
10 those set forth above will become apparent when consideration is given to the following detailed description thereof. Such description makes reference to the annexed drawings wherein:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a new fishing bait apparatus  
15 according to the present invention.

Figure 2 is a side elevational view of the present invention.

Figure 3 is a top plan view of the present invention.

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Figure 4 is a cross-sectional view of the present invention.

Figure 5 is another cross-sectional view of the present invention.

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Figure 6 is a perspective view of a second embodiment of the present invention.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT**

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With reference now to the drawings, and in particular to Figures 1 through 6 thereof, a new fishing bait apparatus

embodying the principles and concepts of the present invention and generally designated by the reference numeral 10 will be described.

As best illustrated in Figures 1 through 6, the fishing bait apparatus 10 generally comprises a container 11 having side, upper and lower walls 12-14, and also having an open top. The upper wall 13 has a plurality of holes 15 being disposed therethrough and is spaced generally parallel above the bottom wall 14 thus forming a water compartment between the upper and lower walls 13,14. The container also includes air holes being disposed through a portion of the side wall 12 above the upper wall 13 of the container 11.

A lid assembly includes a lid member 18 being hingedly and securely attached to the container 11 and also includes lid support members 19,20 for supporting the lid member 18 in an open position. The lid assembly further includes brackets 21,23 being securely attached to an underside of the lid member 18 and having slots 22,24 disposed therein, and also includes eyelets 25,26 being securely attached to the inner side of the side wall 12, and also includes a catch mechanism being securely attached to the side wall 12 near a top edge thereof and having a housing 17 with an opening therein and also having a spring-loaded catch 42 being biasedly disposed through the side wall 12 of the container 11 and in the housing 17. The lid assembly further includes a latch 41 being securely attached to the underside of the lid member 18 and being removably received and engaged by the spring-loaded catch 42 in the housing 17 for latching the lid member upon the open top of the container 11. The lid support members 19,20 are strings each having a first end portion which is conventionally connected to a respective bracket 21,23, and also being strung through a respective eyelet 25,26. The lid assembly also includes a battery-operated

light-emitting member 27 being securely attached to the underside of the lid member 18.

A handle assembly includes a handle 28 being pivotally and securely attached to the container 11. The handle assembly 5 includes a pair of disc-shaped handle retainers 29,30 being securely attached to an outer side of the side wall 12 of the container 11 and having axially-extended bores disposed therein. The handle 28 includes end portions which are securely disposed in the axially-extended bores of the disc-shaped handle retainers 29,30.

10       Bait storage members are disposed in the container 11 and upon the upper wall 13. The bait storage members include a plurality of partitions 31 being disposed upon the upper wall 13 in the container 11, and also include a plurality of gate support members 32 being securely attached to the partitions 31, and further 15 include gate members 33 being slidably supported by the gate support members 32 for forming bait storage compartments upon the upper wall 13 in the container 11, and also include tab members 34 being securely attached to the gate members 33 for retaining the gate members 33 in open positions. As a second embodiment, the 20 bait storage members include cylindrical members 35 being securely disposed side-by side and having openings 36 being disposed through the walls thereof, and also include gates support members 32 being securely attached to the cylindrical members 35, and further include gate members 33 being supported by the gate 25 support members 32 and being closeable over the openings 36 of the cylindrical members 35. The bait storage members also include boxes 37 being removably disposed upon the upper wall 13 of the container 11 for storing worms, and further include covers 38 being removably disposed upon the boxes 37 and having venting holes 39 30 being disposed therethrough, and also include tubular air inlets 40

being securely disposed in side walls of the boxes 37 for allowing air to vent into the boxes 37.

A floatation member 43 being preferably made of Styrofoam material is securely and conventionally attached to the lower wall 5 14 in the container 11 for floating the container 11 upside down.

In use, the user puts water into the container 11, and also puts live bait such as minnows upon the upper wall 13, and sorts the minnows according to size in the various compartments formed by the partitions 31 and separated by the gate members 33.

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As to a further discussion of the manner of usage and operation of the present invention, the same should be apparent from the above description. Accordingly, no further discussion relating to the manner of usage and operation will be provided.

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With respect to the above description then, it is to be realized that the optimum dimensional relationships for the parts of the invention, to include variations in size, materials, shape, form, function and manner of operation, assembly and use, are deemed readily apparent and obvious to one skilled in the art, and all equivalent relationships to those illustrated in the drawings and described in the specification are intended to be encompassed by the present invention.

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Therefore, the foregoing is considered as illustrative only of the principles of the fishing bait apparatus. Further, since numerous modifications and changes will readily occur to those skilled in the art, it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact construction and operation shown and described, and accordingly, all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to, falling within the scope of the invention.